

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Checking the box for wildlife

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Tax time. A burden, with a bit of a consolation for those receiving a refund. But for people in North Carolina, it's also an opportunity.

On line 28 of your North Carolina state income tax form you can check off to contribute money to the state's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund, where it matches federal and other grants, or is used to fund educational activities and watchable-wildlife projects like the North Carolina Birding Trail.

Over the years, projects conducted by wildlife diversity biologists have led to restoration of animals once considered critically endangered, such as the bald eagle and peregrine falcon. Conversely, biologists have worked with animals that aren't yet endangered, such as the box turtle, freshwater mussels and many species of songbirds, to ensure that their populations remain viable and sustainable.

Through their surveying and monitoring efforts, biologists collect data that help them determine the most effective ways to manage wildlife and their habitats, ensuring that species not only survive but thrive in a state where pristine habitat continues to disappear at an alarming rate.

Other projects funded through tax check-off dollars, such as the Green Growth Toolbox, have made habitat more suitable for wildlife. Through the Green Growth Toolbox, biologists last year provided technical guidance to more than 160 local government officials, on ways to design communities and maintain high-quality wildlife habitat while building new homes, workplaces and shopping centers.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.